

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EURE-00 ACDA-10 AGR-10 AID-05

CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 CIEP-02 COME-00 DLOS-06

DOT-00 EB-07 EPA-04 ERDA-07 FEAE-00 FMC-02 TRSE-00

H-02 INR-07 INT-05 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-02

OES-06 OMB-01 PA-02 PM-04 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8429

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

USMISSION USEC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

DIA WASHDC/AH-2/DC-4

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TAGS: EEC PLOS EFIS EI

SUBJ: EC COMMISSION FISHERIES PROPOSALS: IRISH REACTION

REF: EC BRUSSELS 9340

1. IT HAS TAKEN SOME DAYS FOR THE IRISH TO COMPREHEND AND REACT TO THE EC COMMISSION FISHERIES PROPOSALS DESCRIBED IN THE REFTEL. BUT NOW THERE APPEARS TO BE A GROWING PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT CONCERN WHICH COULD LEAD TO A SERIOUS EC CONFRONTATION. THE GOI, UNDER VARIOUS PRESSURES, HAS NOW FLATLY STATED THAT THE PROPOSALS ARE UNACCEPTABLE AND IS APPARENTLY PREPARED TO TAKE A VERY HARD LINE IN THE NEXT EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL, CONFIDENTLY EXPECTING UK SUPPORT.

2. THE IRISH OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSALS CENTERS AROUND A NASCENT BUT GROWING IRISH FISHING INDUSTRY, WHICH IS SUDDENLY REALIZED AS A GROWTH INDUSTRY IN THIS STAGNANT ECONOMY. THE PRESENT 10,000 PERSONS ENGAGED IN FISHERIES IS INCREASING AT THE RATE OF 1,000 PER YEAR, AND THE 23 MILLION POUND INDUSTRY IS GROWING FAST. ALMOST ALL OF THE IRISH FISHING IS CONCENTRATED WITHIN THE 50 MILE OFFSHORE AREA, AND THE IRISH FISHERMEN ARE DEMANDING THAT IRELAND NEGOTIATE AN EXCLUSIVE 50 MILE ZONE WITHIN THE EC 200 MILE ZONE. THE NEWSPAPERS AND, CAUTIOUSLY, THE GOVERNMENT ARE BUILDING THIS UP INTO A BIG ISSUE OF DAVID AND GOLIATH. ONE OF LITTLE IRELAND'S FEW VALUABLE RESOURCES IS ABOUT TO BE RAPED UNCEREMONIOUSLY BY THE BIGGER EUROPEAN STATES. THE FOREGOING HYPERBOLE IS TYPICAL OF THE REACTION. THERE SEEMS TO BE NO DOUBT THAT OFFSHORE IRISH FISHING POTENTIAL IS WORTHWHILE. FROM MANY REPORTS THERE ARE RATHER LARGE FISHING FLEETS NOW HOVERING JUST OUTSIDE THE 12-MILE LIMIT ON THE SOUTH AND WEST COASTS. A BIG FACTORY SHIP OF THE EASTERN EUROPEAN FISHING FLEET, THE BULGARIAN AURELIA, HAS JUST BEEN HAULED INTO CORK FOR FISHING WITHIN THE 12 MILE LIMIT (SEE DAO DUBLIN IR-68480092 AND DUBLIN 2055). AND AS THIS IS BEING WRITTEN WE ARE GETTING REPORTS FROM NAVY SOURCES THAT THE IRISH NAVY IS ATTEMPTING TO BRING A LARGE SOVIET TRAWLER IN FOR THE SAME OFFENSE. SO FAR THE SOVIET SHIP HAS REFUSED THE IRISH DEMAND TO COME INTO AN IRISH PORT. (SEE IR 68480092). THE IRISH NAVY ESTIMATES THAT THERE ARE SEVERAL HUNDRED TRAWLERS CURRENTLY OPERATING OFFSHORE.

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ONE JOURNALIST HAS DESCRIBED IT AS SIMILAR TO THE SLAUGHTER OF THE BUFFALO.

3. UNLIKE THE UK THE SMALL IRISH FISHING INDUSTRY IS NOT WELL ORGANIZED AND DOES NOT REPRESENT ANY POTENT POLITICAL CLOUD. FISHING SO FAR IS A SMALL ELEMENT IN THE IRISH ECONOMY. HOWEVER, THE ISSUE SEEMS TO HAVE GOTTEN BEYOND ANY IMMEDIATE STATISTICS AND IS BUILDING UP TO A QUESTION OF QUOTE VITAL

NATIONAL INTERESTS UNQUOTE. FOREIGN MINISTER FITZGERALD, WHO TOLD US PRIVATELY THAT THIS WAS MORE OF A BOTHER THAN IT WAS WORTH, ISSUED A STRONGLY BUT CAREFULLY WORDED STATEMENT ON THE EC PROPOSALS JUST AS HE LEFT FOR THE UNGA ON SEPT 24:QUOTE: LIKE THE COMMON FISHERIES POLICY ADOPTED BY THE COMMUNITY IN 1971, IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO ENLARGEMENT, WITHOUT CONSULTING OR TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE INTERESTS OF THE NEW MEMBERS, THESE SUGGESTIONS REFLECT THE INTERESTS OF THE ORIGINAL SIX MEMBER STATES AND ARE CLEARLY INAPPROPRIATE TO THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF THE ENLARGED COMMUNITY..... THE SUGGESTIONS MADE WITH RESPECT TO COASTAL BANDS ARE COMPLETELY INADEQUATE AND DO NOT REFLECT THE URGENT NEED TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF COASTAL FISHERMEN WHOSE PRESENT LIVELIHOOD AND FUTURE PROSPECTS ARE CURRENTLY BEING UNDERMINED BY GROSS OVER FISHING, MUCH OF IT BY VESSELS FROM OTHER COMMUNITY COUNTRIES... PROPOSALS WHICH REMEDY THESE DEFECTS, REFLECTING A FAIR BALANCE BETWEEN THE INTERESTS OF THE MEMBER STATES, AND GIVING ADEQUATE WEIGHT TO THE INTERESTS OF COASTAL FISHERMEN IN DISADVANTAGED REGIONS, MUST BE SETTLED IN CONJUNCTION WITH AGREEMENT ON A MANDATE FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES INVOLVING WATERS WITHIN THE 200 MILE LIMIT TO WHICH, AS SUGGESTED BY THE COMMISSION, IRELAND'S FUTURE FISHING LIMITS WILL BE EXTENDED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. UNQUOTE.

4. COMMENT: THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SOUND AND FURY HERE AT THE MOMENT ON FISHERIES, BUT IT IS MOSTLY AIMED AT THE WRONG TARGETS AND WE BELIEVE THAT FITZGERALD IS QUITE AWARE OF THE INTERESTS INVOLVED. IN RESEARCHING THE BACKGROUND OF THIS REPORT WE FIND THAT OFFSHORE IRISH FISHING HAS BEEN GENERALLY LUCRATIVE BUT RATHER LETHARGIC UP UNTIL ABOUT A YEAR AGO, BUT NOW THE SOUTH AND WEST COASTS ARE UNCLASSIFIED

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CROWDED WITH SOPHISTICATED FISHING FLEETS. THE MAJORITY ARE RUSSIAN AND EASTERN EUROPEAN, BUT THERE IS ALSO A GENERAL SPRINKLING OF SCANDINAVIAN, BRITISH, AND WESTERN EUROPEAN TRAWLERS. THE IRISH ARE CERTAINLY AWARE OF THIS ACTIVITY AND BECOMING SOMEWHAT ALARMED. THE GOI WILL WELCOME A QUICK ESTABLISHMENT OF A 200 MILE LIMIT, WHICH WOULD RID THEIR WATERS OF THE BIG EASTERN EUROPEAN QUOTE VACUUM CLEANERS. UNQUOTE COUNTING ON THE UK SUPPORT WITH SIMILAR INTERESTS THE IRISH WILL PRESS HARD FOR A CONSIDERABLE EXCLUSIVE FISHING STAKE WITHIN THE EC BOUNDARIES. WE DOUBT THAT THEY WILL BE WILLING TO ACCEPT A QUOTE QUOTA UNQUOTE SYSTEM AS PROPOSED BY THE EC COMMISSION BECAUSE THIS WILL MORTGAGE BOTH THEIR IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM INTERESTS. FITZGERALD IS KEEPING HIS OPTIONS OPEN AND WE BELIEVE THAT HE WILL WORK WITHIN THE EC, COOPERATING WITH THE UK FOR SOME KIND OF COMPROMISE OF

THE 50 MILE ZONE VS. QUOTAS. THERE IS, HOWEVER, THE DISTINCT POSSIBILITY THAT THE IRISH WILL DECIDE TO BE VERY TOUGH ON THIS ISSUE IN EC DISCUSSIONS. BECAUSE OF THE PUBLICITY IT HAS BECOME A MATTER OF PRIDE OR MACHISMO TO DEFEND IRISH INTERESTS. FITZGERALD AND OTHERS HERE WHO ARE CONCERNED WITH THIS PROBLEM ARE SUDDENLY VERY MUCH AWARE OF GEOGRAPHY AND FISH, WHEREVER THEY MIGHT BE. CURLEY

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